



Saving TEXAS HISTORY

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Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

As most people know the story, the fall of the Alamo is a familiar tale of Anglo defenders standing up to, and eventually being killed by Santa Anna's troops.

But this spring—for the first time ever—a new exhibit at the “Shrine of Texas Liberty” will expand that narrative by focusing on the Tejanos who fought and died there.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo is the third in a series of exhibits in the shrine brought to you by the Alamo and the Texas General Land Office. The exhibit is ambitious, seeking to not only honor the Tejanos Alamo defenders, but to reveal them to Texans today as real people using details culled from their own writings, rare and historic documents and personal mementos.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo opened February 21

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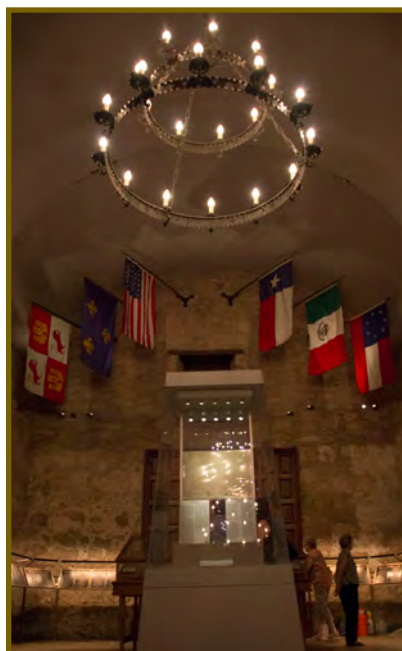
and will run through Friday, June 6. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

The exhibit brings the story of the Alamo's Tejano defenders to life. Visitors inside the shrine will hear the words of several Tejanos and Tejanas who were eyewitnesses to history. Inside the sacristy, visitors will learn how Tejano women and children huddled in the protection of its thick walls to survive the siege.

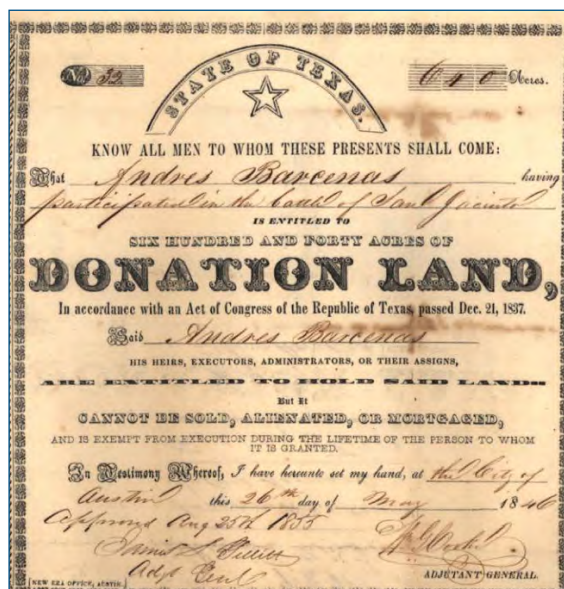
"The whole idea here is to tell a vital part of the story that's been glossed over all these years," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "This wasn't a battle between Texans and Mexicans—this was a battle for liberty. They were fighting for liberty."

Patterson, the state's steward of the Alamo, has long been an advocate for expanding the study of Texas history to include Native Americans and Tejanos, or Texans of Hispanic heritage. This exhibit is the second of two that highlight the Hispanic contribution to Texas and the Alamo.

"With immigration on the forefront of public discussion it's important to remember that Texas began as a part of the Spanish Empire ruled from Mexico," Patterson said. "The first illegal immigrants had names that looked a lot more like mine. This is the whole story of the Alamo. While John Wayne made a movie about the Alamo that largely focused on the Anglo defenders Crockett, Bowie and Travis, it's important to remember the Tejano defenders who sacrificed their lives for Texas' freedom, too."



Rare historic documents are on display as part of the exhibit.



This donation certificate was issued to Andres Barcenas for his service during the Battle of San Jacinto.

Eight Tejano defenders of the Alamo lost their lives in the battle. They were Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, José María Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Damacio Jiménez, José Toribio Losoya, and Andrés Nava. There were also Tejano combatants who survived, or were sent out before the final attack on March 6. Those featured in this exhibit are Andrés Barcenas, Anselmo Bergara, Antonio Cruz y Arocha, Alexandro de la Garza, Brígido Guerrero, and Juan Seguin.

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*The public is invited to view a new exhibit at the Alamo—*Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo*.*

There were also many Tejanas, or Tejano women, who sought refuge within the sacristy of the Alamo church. Those women were Gertrudis Navarro, Juana Navarro Pérez Alsbury, Ana Salazar Castro de Esparza, Petra Gonzales, María Francisca Curvier Losoya, Juana Francisca Losoya Melton, Victoriana de Salinas, Trinidad Saucedo, and Andrea Castañón Villanueva, better known as Madam Candelaria. With the women were nine children: Enrique Esparza, Manuel Esparza, Francisco Esparza, Maria de Jesus Castro Esparza, Juan Losoya, Alejo Perez, Jr., and three daughters of Victoriana de Salinas.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo features over 30 original documents and cultural artifacts that tell the story of the Tejano defenders during the Battle of the Alamo.

The items on display inside the Alamo were pulled from the archival collections of the General Land Office, the Alamo, the Alamo Research Center, the Briscoe Center for American History and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The fragile documents and cultural artifacts provide fascinating and personal insights on the Tejano men, women and children who gave their lives, or witnessed the mythic birth of Texas.

Honor will be served as documents from the Land Office Archives and Records will put to rest a long-standing historical error of fact in regard to one Tejana in particular. María Francisca Curvier Losoya, long misidentified in various publications for more than a century, will at long last come forth from the historical shadows to receive full and accurate public recognition for her role as a survivor and widow of the Battle of the Alamo. This was made possible by the discovery of primary source evidence, an 1861 affidavit filed as part of a land grant application in the Land Office Archives and Records.

Dr. Bruce Winders, Chief Historian at the Alamo, noted that such a discovery “shows that there is so much out there waiting to be found and incorporated into the historical narrative,” of the Alamo, and that the scholarship upon which this exhibit has been built “represents a maturing of the field of Alamo research.”

A highlight of the exhibit is an interactive display, where visitors can hear the words of many of the Tejanos that once echoed throughout the Alamo church. Visitors will hear descriptions of the bloodshed and accounts of the heroic activities of the Texans and Tejanos who were there, all while viewing historical portraits and other images.

The exhibit closes the week of June 6, commemorating Juan Seguín and his fellow Tejano troops taking back possession of San Antonio from the Mexican army.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo is open to the public seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., February 21 to June 6. As always, the “Shrine of Texas Liberty” is open to visitors free of charge. Visitors are asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the documents and no flash photography will be allowed. For more information on the Alamo, please visit the official Alamo website at www.thealamo.org. ✱

Technology Update

The Texas General Land Office continues to make huge gains on its document scanning project. As of this writing, all documents in 36 of the original 38 land districts have been scanned and placed online. In just seven months, scanning work was completed on the Nacogdoches Land District, which consisted of 9,283 files, or 96,119 individual scans, or 16,019 pages scanned per month. Work now moves to the Robertson Land District, which has 13,825 files to be scanned. There are 66,748 files left to scan in total, which should be completed in less than five years. ✱

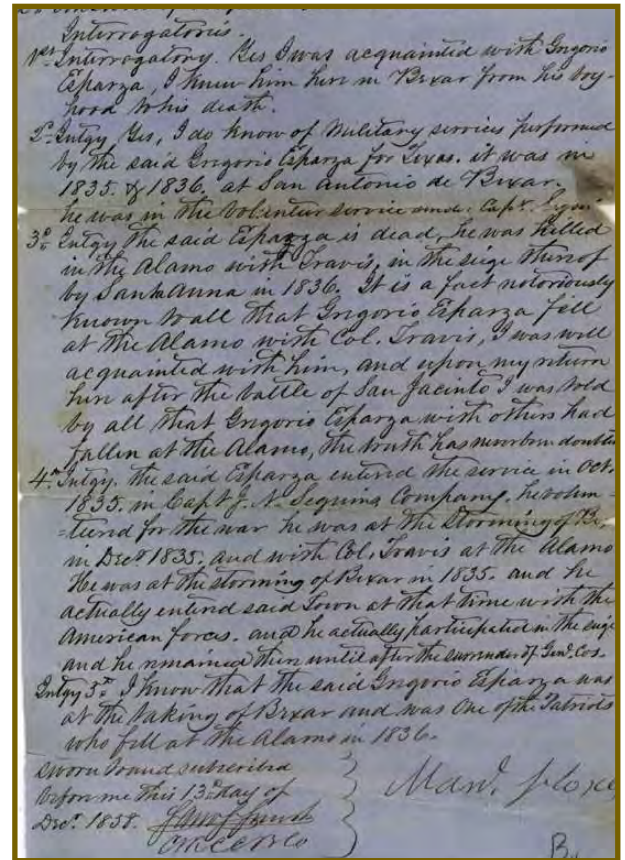
Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

by Jody Edward Ginn, Outreach & Education Team Leader

The General Land Office is proud to announce a new exhibit on display at the Alamo from February 21 through June 6, 2014. *Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* honors those who served, suffered and died at the Alamo during the siege by Santa Anna's centralist army from February 23 – March 5, 1836, and the final battle of the Alamo on March 6, 1836.

The exhibit opens with an explanation of the origins of the Tejano cultural identity and an overview of that culture as it developed in and around San Antonio de Béxar in the 18th and 19th centuries. Artifacts from that period include a chocolate pot discovered during an archaeological excavation on the Alamo grounds; weapons purported to have been used in the battle; and a certified birth certificate from the Land Office archives for Juan Nepomuceno Seguín. Seguín was born in the city and parish of San Fernando on October 26, 1806, to don Erasmus Seguín and doña María Josefa Becerra. He was baptized by Father José Clemente de Arocha on November 3, 1806.

The next section of the exhibit honors the eight Tejanos who died defending the Alamo. An overview of the origins of the Tejano federalist tradition is included, as well as information on Tejano motivations for collaborating with their Anglo neighbors. Artifacts in this section include primary documents from Land Office archival holdings of each individual's service (where they exist), such as an affidavit by Don Manuel Flores from the Court of Claims files.



The affidavit by Don Manuel Flores.



Alamo survivor Maria Gertrudis Navarro Cantu. Photo courtesy of BCAH.

Flores was first sergeant in the company of Juan Seguín, who fought for Texas—along with his brother-in-law—throughout the revolution, from the Siege of Béxar to the Battle of San Jacinto. In his affidavit, Flores attested to Enrique Esparza's service to the cause of Texas, from the "storming" of Béxar in December 1835, until his death "at the Alamo with Col. Travis." Also included are brief biographical sketches of each Tejano Alamo defender who died there.

There were many more Tejanos who served in the Alamo garrison from the time of the Siege of Béxar in December 1835—when Texas forces ousted General Cos' centralist army from the town—until just before the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836. Most of these men survived because they were sent out as scouts and messengers, along with many of their Anglo compatriots, in the days preceding the final assault by Santa Anna's centralist army.

Affidavits by notable Texans and Tejanos, as well as bounty certificates, give proof of the service of the men honored in this section. One such document is the only known written, first-hand account

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by any combatant who witnessed and survived the fall of the Alamo: Brígido Guerrero's deposition in open court in Bexar County on January 1, 1861.

In addition to the men who were serving as combatants in defense of the Alamo were a number of women and their children, who aided the men by cooking and nursing the injured or ill. Most of those women were Tejanas, family members of some of the local Tejano soldiers. Though they were not themselves combatants, these women and children nevertheless witnessed the all too real horrors of war, and were virtually the only survivors of the final assault who were able to relate their experiences in the aftermath of the Alamo battle and the Texas revolt.

This section includes primary documents that demonstrate some of these women's connections to the men who served, such as photos, short biographical sketches, and even an original Mexican colonial era land title for "one and one-half leagues of land," issued by the Barón de Bastrop and signed by Stephen F. Austin to Horace Alexander Alsbury and his brothers in 1824. Alamo survivor Juana Gertrudis Navarro married Alsbury, a noted member of Austin's "Old 300"—the first group of Anglo settlers in Texas—and Texas revolutionary soldier, in January 1836.



1936 Painting of Gregorio Esparza manning a cannon in defense of the Alamo. Photo courtesy of the Alamo Collection.

The final segment in this exhibit pays tribute to the military service of Tejanos to Texas—and later, the United States—throughout history. An overview of their service, including a list of the conflicts in which they have served and the names of Tejanos who have been awarded the Medal of Honor, is included. ✱

Be a Save Texas History Benefactor: A Call to Map Collectors

Don't know what to do with your old, original Texas maps? If you have a Texas map collection, no matter how big or small, and decide that you no longer want to collect and store it, are interested in downsizing, or find that your children have no interest in it, please consider donating your historic map collection to the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records.

The General Land Office has one of the most extensive Texas map collections in existence, with more than 45,000 unique maps, sketches and drawings that document Texas, the American Southwest and Mexico over the last 300 years. The collection is maintained by three full-time staffers, is stored in a state-of-the-art facility which optimizes map preservation, and is constantly growing. We are fully committed to digitizing and placing online every single map in our collection, in order to provide scholars and other interested persons the best and widest access to the unique cartographic history of Texas both now and into the future.

All donors are identified on the Land Office website, and all historic maps are professionally conserved (if needed), digitized, and then made available to the world from our website. Additionally, donations made to the Land Office for public purposes are tax deductible pursuant to Internal Revenue Code §170(c)(1), so this is a great way to get a tax write-off and also help Save Texas History. For information about donating your Texas map collection, please email mark.lambert@glo.texas.gov or call 512-463-5260. ✱



Map 93390. This Houston map was donated to the GLO in 2013 by Warren H. Outlaw, Jr. in memory of Warren H. Outlaw III. It is now one of the most popular maps of Houston in our collection.

118th TSHA Annual Meeting Held in San Antonio

by James Harkins, Director of Public Services

The Texas General Land Office took an active role at the 118th Annual Meeting of the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) from March 6-8 in San Antonio at the Wyndam San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel. By sponsoring two sessions and a special reception at the Alamo, the Land Office highlighted the various resources of its Archives and Records, as well as the work the agency is doing in cooperation with the Alamo.



There was a special reception at Alamo Hall.

On Thursday, March 6, the opening day of the Annual Meeting, the Save Texas History program sponsored Session #1. *The Army Comes to Texas*, presided by Dr. Richard McCaslin of the University of North Texas, and featured three lectures: "Border Control over the Long Haul: Patterns of Military Reaction to Filibustering to and from Texas, 1804-1860," with Samuel Watson of the United States Military Academy at West Point; "The Union Army's XXV Corps on the Rio Grande" with William A. Dobak of Hyattsville, Maryland; and "Disdain and Discrimination: Army Officers' Wives in Reconstruction Texas," with Verity McInnis of Texas A&M University.

On Friday, March 7, the Land Office Archives and Records sponsored Session #30, entitled *Viva Tejas: Spanish and Mexican Texas History Sources on the World Wide Web*, a joint session with the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA). Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner of Archives and Records, presided over the session. Presentations during this session were "In English, Online, and For All: Expanding Access to Texas History through the Bexar Archives," with Brenda Gunn of the University of Texas at Austin; "That They May Possess and Enjoy the Land [Records Online]: The Spanish Collection of the Texas General Land Office," with Dr. José Barragán of the Texas General Land Office; and "Kathryn Stoner O'Connor Mexican Manuscript Collection at the UT San Antonio Libraries," with Amy Rushing of the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Because the TSHA Annual Meeting was in San Antonio, the Land Office invited TSHA members and annual conference attendees to visit the Alamo at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7 for a special reception at Alamo Hall, co-sponsored by the Alamo Beer Company. Historians and guests of TSHA had the opportunity to spend a memorable evening at the historic Alamo with staff from the Land Office and the Alamo. Featured was the new exhibit that opened February 21, *Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo*.

In addition to focusing on this exhibit, the reception was a great opportunity to see updates and changes at the Alamo since the Land Office was granted custodianship by the Legislature in 2011. From the re-branded Alamo Research Center, to new lighting on the façade of the building, to new exhibits that touch upon rarely mentioned subjects, like Tejanos at the Alamo, this was an opportunity for the Texas historical community, through the oldest learned society in the



Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner of Archives and Records, led special tours of the Tejanos at the Alamo exhibit.

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state, the TSHA, to gather at the crossroads of Texas history, the Alamo, and see all of the positive changes that have taken place.

Throughout the meeting, much like in years past, the Land Office had a large, multi-media exhibitor's booth, with dozens of map duplicates available for purchase. There were several State, Republic, pre-Republic and local maps available. Additionally, Land Office staffers were available throughout the meeting to discuss educational, genealogical, and historical programs, as well as future projects that will take place. Tutorials were offered on how to use the various archival resources available, like the Land Grant Database, the Online Map Database, and the GLO GIS web, through the Land Office website.

To learn more about the Texas State Historical Association's 118th Annual Meeting, and the involvement of the Land Office, please visit www.tshaonline.org/annual-meeting. ✱

Educational Resources

by Buck Cole, K-12 Education

“Of the humble private who falls at his post, history is oblivious.” — Noah Smithwick

The Texas soldier, settler and chronicler Noah Smithwick makes a valid point. Historians pay little attention to the lives of ordinary people. Most of history is a record of the famous, the infamous, the movers and shakers, and the official teaching of traditional Texas history is no different. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) metrics identify individuals who are “essential” to understanding the major events of Texas history.

The names of notable Texans span every era of our state's illustrious past. However, there are obviously vast numbers of people who didn't make the TEKS list but whose stories provide important contributions to history. For example, it's one thing to learn that Sam Houston led the Texian army during the Battle of San Jacinto; it's another to read the personal account of a private who guarded Santa Anna after the battle. Now wouldn't that be interesting? What does he say about Santa Anna that one probably wouldn't get from a textbook? The stories of ordinary people matter because they add richness to history and we are drawn to them.

The Texas General Land Office Archives contains the records of ordinary people throughout its collection. Please meet one such person. His name was Esteban Vásquez,¹ a citizen of Goliad prior to the Texas Revolution.

In 1861, 25 years after the revolution, Vasquez submitted a petition to the Bexar County Court for a First Class Headright—over 4,600 acres. For Vásquez to meet the qualifications for this land grant, however, he had to provide legal proof of his eligibility. Through an attorney in Bexar County, Vásquez petitioned the land

Suggested Classroom Strategy

“Keep it or Junk it”

In a nutshell, this strategy asks students to nominate, vote, and discuss which words in a text they feel are most important in addressing a teacher-created Focus Question. The focus question guides students through the document analysis process. This strategy requires students to dig deeper and think critically rather than just reading for facts.

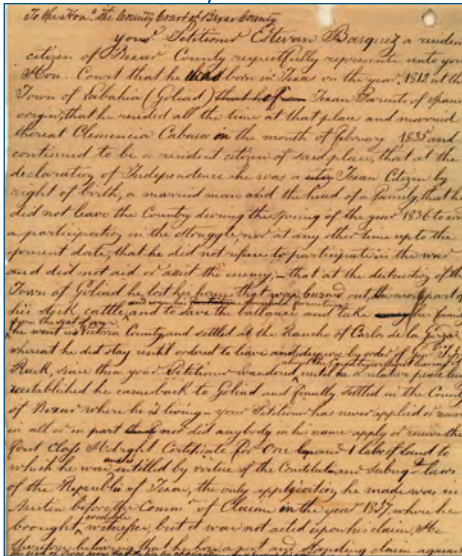
Using the Vasquez petition as an example, the Focus Question might be, “How does Esteban's account help us understand the experiences and challenges of Tejanos during the Texas Revolution and refugees in general?”

For more detailed instructions on how to use this strategy in your classroom, please visit <http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices/teaching-in-action/25461>.

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Esteban Basquez petition for Headright land grant, April 1861.

granting authorities to make his case.

In his petition (formal request) Vásquez tells a compelling story. He states that during the Texas Revolution he was burned out of his home, wandered the countryside with his family in tow, found refuge at a ranch near Victoria, but was ordered to leave by the orders of a Texan general and eventually relocated to Bexar County. These are just some of the details of his story.

What makes this story so intriguing is that little attention has been given to Tejanos living in Texas during the revolution in the traditional historical narratives. Which side did they align with? What were their experiences? Were they considered patriots or traitors, or both, and by whom? How does Esteban's story compare to other groups of people caught in similar situations today and throughout history? Introducing the stories of ordinary people into the curriculum helps students develop new perspectives in history and helps rescue these stories from Smithwick's "oblivion." ✨

¹ The coming together of Anglo and Hispanic cultures resulted in, among other things, the misspelling of proper Spanish names such as Basquez (Vásquez); for our purposes here—and to avoid confusion—we have used the standard Spanish spelling of the names.

A Word from the Public

What a wonderful presentation! I wish I could have been to all of them! Thank you for your time, free goodies, and helpful insights on how to capture our students hearts into the love of Texas History!

In February we will begin an immigration project. My students will be sifting through primary resources to find who came to Texas and information about their background to understand what they brought to Texas. This graph [that was provided in the workshop] will be a great visual to show as we begin to introduce this.

Again thank you for your time! I know it was not as long as you would have liked, but I promise we are rallying to have you visit with us again!

—Danielle Caples, 7th Grade — Texas History, Westbrook Intermediate, Clear Creek ISD

Tell Us About Your Experience at the Land Office Archives

Have you had a good experience with the Texas General Land Office Archives? Maybe you attended a tour or presentation that took your breath away. Or maybe you learned something that you never knew about Texas history. Perhaps you discovered a document that shed some new light on one of your ancestors.

Please “friend” Save Texas History on Facebook, and share your experience with us. If you are not on Facebook, please email archives@glo.texas.gov with details about your experience at the Land Office Archives.

The best story about someone's experience with the Archives will appear in the next edition of *Saving Texas History* and will win its writer a free map! ✨

MAP SPOTLIGHT

Carta de las provincias de Tejas, Nuevo Santander, Nuevo Reino de Leon y Nueva Estremadura, 1773

Map #3031

by Alex Chiba, Map Curator

This interesting map in the General Land Office collection shows “Spanish Texas” in 1773. The focus of the map, as the title suggests, is on the various *provincias internas* (internal provinces) as they existed in Nueva Espana (New Spain) when the map was drawn. The provinces shown and labeled on the map include Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Estremadura, Nuevo Reyno de León, Nuevo Santander, Coahuila and of course, Texas, or Nuevas de Filipinas, as it was also known.



GLO Map #3031.

One of the most striking observations when viewing this map is the high concentration of settlement south of the Rio Grande—labeled on the map as “Rio Grande del Norte o Brabo”—compared to the relative lack of settlement in what we know today as Texas. Indeed the cities of Monclova and Monterrey stand out as the largest population centers and a fairly complex network of roads and smaller settlements pepper the map, indicating vibrant settlement in this area. North of the Rio Grande, however, it’s apparent that San Antonio (Villa de San Antonio de Béjar and the accompanying Presidio) is the most remote Spanish settlement in Texas, with smaller settlements established on the road from San Juan Bautista de Rio Grande—a mission town often called the “Gateway to Spanish Texas”—to San Antonio.

This was not always the case, however. In the early part of the 18th century the Franciscans made several efforts to establish missions in what would today be known as East Texas west of the Sabine River (labeled “R. de los Savinas” on this map) and east of the Brazos River (“Rio de los Brazos de Dios”). Their aim was to convert various Native American tribes in the area, but also, after some of the Frenchman La Salle’s incursions into New Spain in the late 1600s, to consolidate Spanish claims to the area. Two of these early East Texas missions, “Concepcion” and “Mission de los Tejas,” are spotted on the map not far from the Trinity River (“Rio de la Trinidad”), but by 1773, when the map was drawn, these had been abandoned. This was due to the less than enthusiastic reception of the Franciscans by the native peoples, and because of the ever present threat of the French, who tussled with Spain throughout much of the 18th century. By 1773, efforts to establish missions in East Texas were formally considered a failure with an order from Barón Juan María de Ripperdá, Governor of Texas, to close all missions in East Texas. Focus was then placed on the missions around San Antonio and La Bahía (Goliad) that were much closer to the well-settled areas of New Spain.

Perhaps one of the most interesting features of this map is the notation of “aqui fué muerto M. de la Salle en al año de 1687” which translates to “here is where M. La Salle died in 1687” just south and west of the Trinity River. Historians are not in total agreement on where La Salle died when his crew mutinied and murdered him. Many believe he was killed closer to the Brazos and Navasota rivers, near present-day Navasota, while others believe he was killed closer to present-day Huntsville. This map seems to support the latter assertion with the notation on his death.

No relief or topography is shown on this map, which focuses on the many settlements south of the Rio Grande. Additionally, many Native American tribes and their territories are shown, including lands heavily populated by various nations of Apache, the Cujanes and the Carancaguaces (Karankawa) among others. As such, this old map provides a wonderful snapshot of New Spain in 1773, before mass settlement in what would later be known as Texas, by those who later became known as Tejanos, in the first half of the 19th century.

This map in the Archives of the General Land Office is a color copy of the original which is housed in the *Servicio Geográfico del Ejercito, Archivo de Planos* in Madrid, Spain. *

Why Tejanos Fought in the Texas Revolt

by Jody Edward Ginn, Outreach & Education Team Leader

Spain claimed a vast region for its New World empire, though most of it was populated not by Spanish subjects, but by independent tribal peoples—whose ancestors had immigrated there many thousands of years earlier. Spanish authorities had established hegemony in Meso-America (Mexico) and portions of South America, but the northern reaches of the lands they claimed remained the domain of Indians for virtually all of the Spanish colonial period.

Though San Antonio de Béxar was not the first Spanish settlement in Texas, its geographical location led to its development as a political and economic crossroads between Indian and European cultures. Therefore, it became the hub of development of the Tejano cultural identity, adopted by Spanish citizens in Texas of diverse ethno-racial heritage. San Antonio de Béxar was more than 100 years old by the time the revolt began that would lead to Texas' independence from Mexico. The city had previously emerged as a military, economic, and cultural crossroads of Texas on the northern Mexican frontier, a vibrant and well-organized civil society. The battles that would make it famous were not over control of the Alamo complex—they were over control of the town and region as a whole.



1826 Map of the "United States of Mexico" by H.S. Tanner. Courtesy of the Mary Jon & J.P. Bryan Visions of the West Collection.

San Antonio de Béxar's occupants were fiercely independent minded and self-sufficient, largely a result of their relative isolation from Mexico City, combined with their proximity to the United States and diverse Indian nations. Tejanos needed and demanded local control in order to protect and nurture their own economic and political interests, which were often at odds with those of the nation as a whole. Their disdain for outside governmental interference led them to evolve a long-standing federalist tradition.

The Texas Revolution that eventually led to independence did not occur in a political vacuum, rather it was part and parcel of the larger federalist/centralist civil war in Mexico at that time. Similar uprisings occurred in states like Oaxaca and Zacatecas where, like their Tejano counterparts, the inhabitants resisted Santa Anna's usurpation of power and elimination of their constitutional rights. The difference was that Texas had a substantial population of Anglo-American colonists who grew up with similar notions of local control and federalism. Many Tejanos chose to collaborate with the Anglo-Americans in resisting their mother country. Together they mounted the only successful resistance to Santa Anna's encroachments on Mexican freedom at the time, which resulted in Texas' separation from its country of origin. ✨

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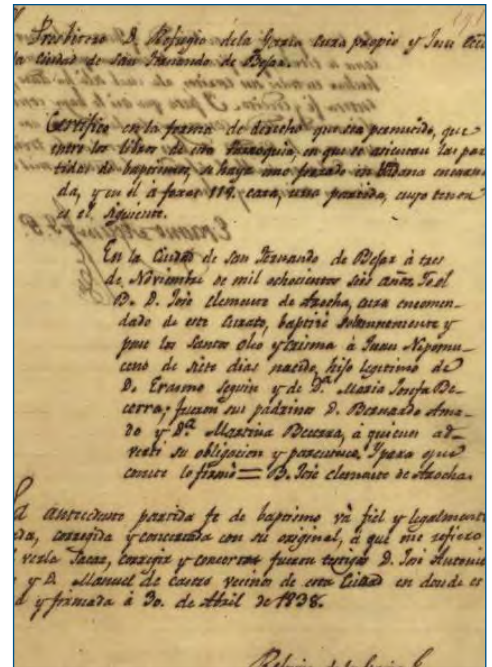
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From The Spanish Collection: Juan Nepomuceno Seguín's Baptismal Certificate

by Dr. José Barragán, Spanish Translator

Among the documents housed in the Archives of the Texas General Land Office, there exists an item singular to the collection: a certified copy of a birth certificate for Juan Nepomuceno Seguín, a native-born Tejano who was a major political and military figure of the Texas Revolution and the Republic of Texas. Seguín served as an officer of the Alamo garrison sent out during the Siege to seek reinforcements. The birth certificate, copied 32 years after his baptism in 1806, allows us a rare glimpse of bexareño familial ties and the legal processes through which Tejanos navigated before and after Texas independence. Copies of baptismal certificates were produced during important events in which the instrument functioned as a form of identification, such as graduations, marriage, or entrance to military or civil office.

In Spanish America, baptismal records formed the basis of identity and family lineage. Through the sacrament and the instrument that documented the act, parents and sponsors linked the child to the familial lineage. The relatively short entry from the parish baptismal records, penned by Father José Clemente de Arocha, reveals that Juan Nepomuceno Seguín was born in San Fernando de Béxar on November 3, 1806 to don Erasmo Seguín and doña María Josefa Becerra. Father Arocha administered the sacrament of Baptism on the seventh day of his birth; don Bernardo Amado and doña Martina Becerra assisted as his godparents, or sponsors.



Juan Seguín's baptismal certificate.

The entry reveals much about the family's social standing in the region. The honorific don/doña used to address Juan Seguín's parents and godparents recognized the families' standing among Tejano elites. His godfather Bernardo Amado, a European-born Spaniard (peninsular), had arrived in 1800 from Galicia and held the position of postmaster at La Bahía. More importantly, Father Arocha recognized Seguín as the legitimate son of Erasmo and María Josefa, which determined Juan's status in the community. This legitimacy provided the child with the tools necessary to inherit the family's standing and all the appurtenances that came with it. Although the certificate makes no mention of it, there appears to be only one book for the baptisms of the parish. This meant that, unlike many other places in Spanish America, all of Béxar's residents were recorded in the same ledger, regardless of their racial makeup.

Father Refugio de la Garza, the priest at San Fernando, made the official copy on April 30, 1838. To authenticate the copy of the certificate, José Antonio Días and Manuel de Castro witnessed, compared and corrected the copy to the original. On the same day, Erasmo Seguín, then acting as Juez Principal (Chief Justice) of the Department of Bexar, certified the priest's signature. Continuing with the Spanish and Mexican traditions, the presence of the witnesses and the Chief Justice's signatures legitimized the copy of the baptismal certificate so that Juan Seguín could use it wherever he saw fit and necessary.

The document, written in Spanish, demonstrates the transition witnessed by Tejanos at Bexar in those early years of the Republic. The instrument's format also resembles that of documents from the Mexican period. Yet, despite the language of the document, its authors adopted the new nation's laws and terminology; most striking of all is the Spanish heading República de Texas, Condado de Béxar (Republic of Texas, County of Bexar) on Erasmo Seguín's certification. But why is this document housed together with Seguín's title? For the answer, we have to consult both his petition for a land grant in 1833 and the laws of the State of Coahuila y Texas. Let's begin with the latter. The 1825 Colonization

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Law of Coahuila y Texas sought to attract foreigners to settle in the state; by the 1830s the state Legislature wanted to compensate coahuiltexanos, or the residents of the state, who had settled in frontier towns for their efforts in defending their communities at their own expense. The Legislature thus decreed that these residents would pay a reduced price for the land they obtained thereafter. Those residents who had been settled for more than 24 years would pay one half of the total price set by the Colonization Law; those of 35 years paid one-third, and those who had defended their towns for more than 40 years would be exempt from payment.

In his 1833 petition for land, Juan Seguín noted that he was over 25 years of age, a man with a large family and enough resources to settle and cultivate a tract at the same time, and thus requested that he be granted the land. In order to receive the incentive, as stipulated in Decree 128, the claimant had to provide proof from the Ayuntamiento (city council) that he had served and that he had been settled in the area for the amount of time that he claimed. Manuel Ximénez, the Ayuntamiento's regidor (alderman), confirmed Seguín's age and service, and after selecting his land on Galveston Island, Seguín received it at the reduced price based on his service. Although there is no mention as to why he had to submit a baptismal certificate in 1838, it is likely that Seguín wanted to provide additional proof of his residency to back his claim. ✨

Bexareños Elect Representatives to the General Convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos

On February 1, 1836, the citizens of Bexár (more than 80 Tejanos) gathered at the Alamo to elect representatives to attend the General Convention that would be held at Washington-on-the-Brazos. They chose from four candidates: José Antonio Navarro, José Franciso Ruiz, Erasmo Seguín (father of Juan Nepomuceno Seguín), and Gaspar Flores, and elected Navarro and Ruiz to represent the Tejanos from Bexár.

On March 2, 1836 (four days before the fall of the Alamo) that assembly declared Texas to be independent from Mexico. The surprise Texan victory at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836 effectively "ratified" that declaration. ✨

ARRESTED AT THE ALAMO

JANUARY 1811 AND AN UPRISING AT THE ALAMO.



This week in Texas History, brought to you by this station and the Save Texas History program of the General Land Office.

January 22, 1811. San Antonio de Bexar. With revolution brewing in Mexico, Spanish Governor of Texas Manuel Salcedo is under fire.

After he jails two soldiers suspected of fostering revolt, and orders troops to the Rio Grande to fight Mexican rebels, locals have had enough.

Captain Juan Bautista de las Casas takes command of troops and arrests Salcedo at the Alamo. He frees the jailed soldiers and seizes all Spanish property. Las Casas rules for less than three months. In March he is captured by Spanish forces and later executed.

The Casas revolt occurred 202 years ago,
This Week in Texas History.

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